

**INPUTS OF TÜRKİYE
TO THE CONCEPT PAPERS OF THE OCEAN ACTION PANELS
FOR THE 2025 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE**

a. Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers.

Türkiye welcomes all efforts to achieve sustainable fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture in accordance with FAO Code of Conduct For Responsible Fisheries. For more than 50 years, Türkiye has been implementing conservation-based management regime in all seas and in its inland waters.

Türkiye, taking into consideration FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, has been successfully establishing fisheries management rules approved by international fisheries organizations. Existing fisheries Law which entered into force in 1971 was revised and amended Law entered into force in 2020 to meet the needs of the sector. The New Law is developed in accordance with the decisions of regional and international fisheries organizations. Accordingly, Türkiye has taken important steps for the improvement of data collection and scientific assessments, establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework. It also ensures to combat more effectively against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and supporting small-scale coastal fisheries while improving aquaculture.

Türkiye also acknowledges the importance of inland and marine small-scale and artisanal fisheries to sustainable development, food security and nutrition, and resilience of coastal and rural communities. In Türkiye, almost 90% of fishing vessels fleet activated in sea and inland waters consists of small-scaled fishing vessels. The share of small-scale fisheries on total production is around 10%.

Türkiye has taken important steps to conserve small-scale fishery. Recording of the fishing methods of small-scale vessels, small-scale fisheries catch data as well as collecting the accurate and valid data on socio-economic status of the small-scale fishermen are important for the management of fisheries. Türkiye has been encouraging and providing financial support to small-scale coastal fishermen to maintain their traditional structure since 2017.

Türkiye has also introduced new strict technical measures to regulate fisheries, particularly by focusing on fishing gear and fishing season. Türkiye supports and participates to the activities related to small-scale fisheries at the international level.

Türkiye is always willing to cooperate in order to reach the desired goals and leave sustainable marine resources to the future generations. Türkiye will continue to spare no effort in enhancing closer and fruitful cooperation for sustainable management of fisheries and accordingly pays importance to this Panel.

b. Conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems.

Oceans and seas are the world's largest ecosystems, covering 70 percent of the Earth's surface and hosting an estimated 80 percent of our planet's biodiversity. The health of our oceans and seas is at a critical juncture. Marine and coastal ecosystems are facing unprecedented pressures due to human activities.

Türkiye, with its extensive coastline along the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Sea of Marmara, recognizes the importance of sustainable marine and coastal management.

Traditional management paradigms often operate in silos, neglecting the interconnectedness of marine ecosystems and the cumulative impacts of human activities. Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) recognizes the complex interdependencies within ecosystems, including human communities, ensuring that ecological integrity is not compromised by sectoral interests.

By integrating EBM into Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) plans and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), significant steps have been taken to address the multifaceted challenges confronting marine ecosystems in Türkiye.

With this understanding, the relevant concept paper should highlight the importance of integrating EBM into ICZM planning MSP.

Additional Recommendations:

- **Integrated Assessment Frameworks:** Developing multidimensional assessment tools that incorporate ecological, social, economic and cultural indicators, facilitating informed decision-making that reflects ecosystem dynamics.
- **Adaptive and Precautionary Approaches:** Implementing management strategies that are both flexible and precautionary, capable of adjusting to new scientific insights and uncertainties inherent in marine ecosystems.
- **Stakeholder Management Models:** Promote management arrangements that empower local communities, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with scientific research to enhance stewardship and compliance.

The conservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, including the largely unexplored deep-sea environments are critical imperatives for global sustainability. Advanced integration of MSP and ICZM planning, enriched by cutting-edge science, robust governance and inclusive stakeholder engagement, can transform how we interact with our oceans. By embracing innovative solutions, strengthening international cooperation and committing to actionable goals, these ecosystems can be protected against current and future threats.

This contribution aligns with SDG 14, notably, Target 14.2: Sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems and Target 14.7: Increase the economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources.

Marine protected areas (MPA) also play an important role in protecting the biodiversity of the oceans and also for carbon storage. Therefore, MPAs need to be expanded and protected with effective management plans. In order to protect the rich biological diversity within oceans and seas, Special Environmental Protection Zones and Natural Protected Areas are designated and scientific studies are carried out in Türkiye. It would be important to highlight the importance of MPAs in the concept paper as well.

c. Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level.

As surrounded on three sides by the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Aegean Sea, Türkiye has been actively contributing to the global and regional efforts to achieve SDG 14. Türkiye has been a party to the Barcelona and Bucharest Conventions, for the protection of Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, respectively.

The **regional cooperation**, in the framework of such Regional Seas Conventions, has a key role in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG14 as well as other relevant goals and targets set at global level. [*For instance, a number of ground-breaking decisions were adopted at COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention held in Türkiye in 2021. One of those has been the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI.*]

The importance of **Regional Seas Conventions and regional cooperation** need to be recognized properly at the UN Oceans Conference and accordingly be reflected in the relevant concept note.

d. Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities:

We need to increase measures to protect the marine environment from land-based pollutants, such as agricultural run-off, plastic waste, untreated sewage and industrial chemicals. Addressing marine litter, particularly plastics, is a critical priority. We attach importance to the ongoing negotiation process for the development of an **internationally legally binding instrument on plastics pollution**.

Türkiye has implemented the “**Zero Waste Blue**” campaign, which is a marine-focused extension of our successful “**Zero Waste**” initiative that was recognized by the UN General Assembly Resolution 77/161 entitled “*Promoting zero-waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”. The campaign aims to reduce marine pollution through public awareness, waste management, and international cooperation. Scaling up such initiatives globally, in particular at the 2026 UN Oceans Conference, would accelerate progress in achieving SDG14, therefore be reflected in the concept note.

e. Leveraging ocean, climate and biodiversity interlinkages:

The ocean is central to our global response to **climate change**. The role of the oceans and its ecosystems have already been recognized by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. At the 2025 UN Oceans Conference, **we need to prioritize addressing the climate-ocean nexus** by integrating SDG14 with climate action.

The Mediterranean basin is a climate change hotspot. At COP23 of the Barcelona Convention (2023), the Parties decided to establish a Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change hosted by Türkiye. With the effects of climate change increasingly felt in the Mediterranean region, the Centre aims to play a leading role globally through its activities on adaptation and mitigation. We consider the establishment of this Center as an important opportunity to accelerate action on the implementation of SDG14.

f. Advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind

Türkiye believes in the transformative potential of the **Blue Economy** to drive sustainable development. By investing in marine-based renewable energy, sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and eco-tourism, we can create economic opportunities. Institutional capacity building for unlocking the full potential of the sustainable blue economy is critical to accelerate action on the implementation of SDG 14. It is important to mobilize more economic resources or to develop tools and approaches for Blue Economy.

h. Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health.

In the context of this Panel, we need to commit to ensuring fair access to marine technologies, capacity-building, and scientific data, particularly for least-developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This is essential for creating inclusive, sustainable blue economies worldwide.

Türkiye considers the **UN Technology Bank for LDCs** as an important mechanism for assisting LDCs for **ocean-based technologies**. The role of the UN Technology Bank needs to be highlighted in the context of SDG14 in the concept paper.

i. Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UNCLOS.

UNCLOS does not have a “universal and unified character. The Convention is not the only legal framework which regulates all activities in the oceans and seas. These concerns and objections have also been raised by a number of other States throughout the years. While international efforts to establish a regime of the seas that is based on the principle of equity and is acceptable to all States are appreciated, the Convention does not provide sufficient safeguards for particular geographical situations and, as a consequence, does not take into consideration conflicting interests and sensitivities stemming from special circumstances. Furthermore, the Convention does not allow States to make reservations to its articles. (Therefore, Türkiye disassociates herself from references made to UNCLOS in the contributions received from Member States on the concept paper for this Panel as well as possible references to be made in the concept paper)

Considering the fact that not all States that participates in the UN Oceans Conference are Parties to the UNCLOS, the concept paper should highlight that those States that are not Parties to UNCLOS shall implement other relevant instruments of international law, to which they are bound by, aimed at enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources.

j. Mobilizing finance for ocean actions in the support of SDG14

SDG 14 remains the most under-invested Sustainable Development Goal. **4th International Conference on Financing for Development**, which will take place immediately after the UN Oceans Conference, is an excellent opportunity to address the financing gap for achieving SDG14.

We also need to highlight **innovative financing solutions**, including leveraging public-private partnerships, to scale up investments in marine conservation, sustainable fisheries, and renewable energy.